

**Hampton Beach Area Commission  
100 Winnacunnet Road  
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842**

**Annual Report - October 30, 2009**



Town of Hampton



NH Dept of Resources  
& Economic Development



NH Dept of  
Transportation



Hampton Beach  
Village District



Hampton Area  
Chamber of Commerce



Rockingham Planning  
Commission

**Introduction**

The Hampton Beach Area Commission (HBAC), referred to as “Commission” in this report, was established in June, 2003 by the New Hampshire legislature under RSA 216-J:1–J:5 to assist in the implementation of the Hampton Beach Area Master Plan. Its duties include consultation and advice to the town and to state agencies to accomplish the goals set out in the 50-year plan.

The Commission is comprised of representatives of all major stakeholders in the Hampton Beach area. There are two members each from the Town of Hampton and the Hampton Beach Village District, and one member each from the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce, the Rockingham Planning Commission, the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP).

Name	Representing
Fred Rice	Town of Hampton
John Nyhan	Town of Hampton
Tom McGuirk	Hampton Beach Village District
Geannina Guzman-Scanlan	Hampton Beach Village District
Chuck Rage	Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce
Fran McMahon	Rockingham Planning Commission
Bill Watson	Department of Transportation
Eric Steltzer	Office of Energy and Planning
Brian Warburton	Department of Resources and Economic Development

**NOTE: In the spring, 2009, The Office of Energy and Planning, at their own request with little notice, vacated their seat on the Commission**

During the past year, the Commission’s officers were as follows:

John Nyhan	Chairman
Brian Warburton	Vice Chair
Bill Watson	Secretary/Treasurer

Jamie Steffen, Hampton Town Planner and Candace Sicard, Hampton Planning Coordinator, provided administrative and technical assistance to the Commission. Candace’s part time/temporary position was funded through a private grant.

A significant event that took place in 2009 was the passing of HB 293 which 1) changed the terms of office for members of the Hampton Beach Area Commission, 2) changed the Commission's Annual Report, due date from October 1 to November 1 of each year and 3) gave the Commission authority to replace the seat vacated by OEP with a community at large seat appointed by the Commission. This bill was supported by the full Commission. More information on HB 293 can be found at ([www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2009/HB0293.html](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2009/HB0293.html))

### **Background and History**

During its first year (2003-2004) the Commission conducted a series of "Visioning Workshops" to develop concepts for economic development, zoning, parking, pedestrian and traffic flow needs, and future development potential. The product of these sessions provided the basis of design for the \$12 million infrastructure improvement project implemented by the Town in 2004-2006.

In 2004-2005, the Commission used the conclusions and recommendations of the Visioning Workshops as the basis for establishing subcommittees in four specific areas: community development, beachscape, zoning and redevelopment, and transportation and parking. Each subcommittee defined the main requirements within its area, and began developing goals and plans for specific activities.

In 2005-2006, the Commission began development of several specific plans based upon previous work and input received at a public hearing. The majority of the emphasis was on traffic and parking improvements, and seeking support for replacement of the existing Hampton River Bridge.

Since 2006, the Commission has continued to work on the above four areas along with expanding its scope in 2008-2009 to include playing a active role in advocating State funding for the redevelopment of Hampton Beach State Park. It has also added grant writing capabilities and has participated with local, regional and state partners in applying for grants related to Hampton Beach Area Master Plan. Work during the past year has included the following:

### **Hampton Beach State Park Redevelopment Project**

The Commission became the chief lobbyist of a NH Capital Budget request sponsored by the Hampton legislative delegation along with Senator Martha Fuller Clark to fund a proposal by DRED – Division of Parks and Recreation to redevelop Hampton Beach State Park. After many months of meetings/public hearings including sessions with Governor John Lynch and NH Legislators, our efforts were successful and DRED was awarded \$14.5 million to pay for the construction of two new bath houses facilities – one near the Marine Memorial and another near

Haverhill Street as well as a new Seashell Complex that will replace the existing complex with a new open air theatre complex and central visitors facilities. This project was needed to replace the current facilities, which have deteriorated due to age and no longer meet the needs of the public. The Commission continues to work with state officials in securing additional funds to build a south beach visitors center within the state park area. Since the award announcement, the Commission has been designated as the communication vehicle for DRED in keeping the Hampton community up to date on the progress of the project and has been actively involved in the selection process of the project's construction manager.

**Community Development Subcommittee (Tom McGuirk, Chair):**

This subcommittee provided ongoing assistance to developers by reviewing plans and suggesting possible options for modifying or improving building design and other features that would blend in more appropriately with the "Victorian Village" theme that has been recommended for the beach area. The subcommittee completed the development of a "design guidelines" booklet which will act as a reference to assist developers in the future. This booklet was approved by the full Commission in Spring 2009 and forwarded to the Hampton planning department for future use.

**Beachscape Subcommittee (Geannina Guzman-Scanlan, Chair):**

The beachscape subcommittee ensures that the Commission is aware of the actions of the Hampton Beach Village District Precinct's Beautification Committee, which has implemented numerous projects that improve the overall appearance of the beach, to include the attractive flower gardens at the Hampton River and Route 101 entries to the beach. The subcommittee was successful in obtaining approvals for the installation of welcoming banners on the light poles along Route 1A at the southern entrance to the beach. Finally, the subcommittee was actively involved in obtaining recycling barrels from Waste Management (via a donation) that was distributed at various entrance areas of the beach.

**Zoning and Redevelopment Subcommittee (Fran McMahon, Chair):**

The subcommittee continues to work with the Town Planner, the Planning Board and the Rockingham Planning Commission to recommend revisions and updates to the Town's zoning regulations for the beach area that would improve overall standards throughout the beach area. Over the past few years, recommended zoning changes pertaining specifically to the beach area were defeated at Town Meeting. This may have been due, in large part, to the length and complexity of the warrant articles being a deterrent to understanding them. Efforts to improve zoning for the beach area will continue and the subcommittee will work with the Planning board

to develop a warrant article of limited scope for the Hampton voters to consider in this coming year.

#### **Transportation and Parking Subcommittee (Fred Rice, Chair):**

A major project that the subcommittee worked on this year was securing funding for a single, comprehensive, objective study of the existing parking situation at Hampton Beach, the economic impacts related to parking, and the transportation elements that must be an integral part of the plan. During the past year, the Commission was successful in obtaining funds and assistance from the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC). This past August, the subcommittee in conjunction with RPC began the first step of the study by hiring two local vendors that conducted an aerial survey of Hampton Beach on three typical busy summer days. More than 1000 photos were collected. The second stage, the ground survey, has been determined more complicated than initially anticipated and will take longer to complete. The subcommittee will continue to work on the study throughout the winter and into next summer. It is hoped the resulting update will serve as a baseline for the development of future parking and transportation capabilities on Hampton Beach.

The subcommittee continues to actively promote measures to replace the two-lane Underwood drawbridge over the Hampton River with a four-lane fixed span, rather than rehabilitate the existing structure. The replacement would accommodate the growth anticipated for the area, eliminate the traffic delays caused by the drawbridge, and create adequate evacuation routes necessitated by homeland security and public safety concerns. Based upon input from the Commission and the Hampton Board of Selectmen, DOT agreed to do a much-needed rehab in two phases, with the first phase starting in 2008. There would then be an eight year window, during which the Town and the Commission could attempt to arrange funding for a replacement before the final, long-term (25-year) rehab measures would have to be implemented in 2017. In May, 2008, the Town of Hampton formed the "Hampton River Bridge Task Force" to pursue the construction of the new bridge. The Commission will head this effort, and is currently working with State Rep. Nancy Stiles of Hampton to get the bridge on the 10-year plan and to secure public and/or private funding within the available timeframe.

#### **Earth, Sea and Space Center Proposal**

In 2005, the non-profit "Friends of the Earth, Sea and Space Center," selected the State Park land near the river, currently used for parking, as its first choice out of many potential sites in the seacoast area, for a year-round educational and recreational museum facility. Estimated attendance at the Center could reach 400,000 visitors throughout the year, which would be the catalyst for making Hampton Beach a year-round destination. Potential revenues to the state are estimated at nearly \$900,000, which is triple the current parking revenues at this facility. The

proposal is consistent with the Master Plan, and so the Commission has assisted the “Friends” group in gathering information and support for the project. A significant amount of private capital has been raised by the “Friends” toward a feasibility study and preliminary design of the center. Throughout this past year, Mr. Rice, representing the Commission, participated in a variety of meetings with local, regional and state officials briefing and updating them on the proposed facility. The “Friends” group anticipates gathering sufficient additional information and revenue projections to justify an indication of positive support at the state level for the feasibility study to proceed.

### **Recommended Projects/Initiatives**

At the last meeting of the Commission in October, 2009, while planning for the next HBAC session starting in November, 2009, it was recommended by the full Commission to work on the following projects and initiatives:

1. The State Park Redevelopment Project - Continuing to be the communication conduit between DRED and the local community on the progress of the project and to work towards assisting the State in finalizing the funding for the visitor station at the state park.
2. The Beach Infrastructure Project - Work with the town to bring sewer services to the identified seven streets left out from the original infrastructure project.
3. The Beach Fire Substation - Provide appropriate advice to the Town on the impact of a new substation and how it applies to the long range planning of the Hampton Beach Master Plan.
4. The Parking Study - Continue our efforts to complete the study and determine future recommendations
5. Beautification/Signage Project - Continue our efforts by working on projects that include additional funding for street lighting that was not completed and looking at ways how we can "clean up" the west side of the south entrance to Hampton Beach.
6. Economic/commercial strategies – Recommend and promote improvements to the infrastructure and streetscape on the west side of Ocean Blvd.
7. Zoning – Continue to work with Town officials on Zoning Ordinance amendments that would be consistent with the recommendations of the Hampton Beach Master Plan.
8. Ocean Blvd – Provide advice and support improvements along Ocean Blvd (road, drainage and sidewalks) from the Underwood Memorial Bridge north to N street.
9. Underwood Memorial Bridge – Continue our efforts to explore realistic solutions to funding a new four way fixed span bridge.

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On behalf of the entire Hampton Beach Area Commission, I would like to express thanks to the entire Hampton legislative delegation, especially Representative Nancy Stiles and Executive Counselor Bev Hollingworth, Hampton Town Officials, and the Hampton Beach Village District Commissioners for their interest, support and assistance on various Commission projects and efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

John Nyhan, Chairman